

1956

# SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN

2 WEST 45TH STREET, NEW YORK 36, N.Y. MURRAY HILL 7-1200

December 29, 1955

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

We have now spent some time with your article. Although we are obviously not biologists, we appreciate that the article describes one of the most interesting and significant themes in all of modern biology. Thus it is with considerable regret that I must tell you that the article is not suited to our present needs.

There are two reasons for this. One is that we are committed to two other articles on topics that form a part of your discussion. This reason would suffice, but I give you another because I hope it will keep us in touch in the future.

I refer to the fact that the article is simply too difficult for what we conceive to be our readership. I am sure that the article would be of keen interest to most biologists, but I think it would be hard going for a physicist. This does not take account of the social scientists, engineers and just plain laymen among our readers.

Now sooner or later we will have published the two articles to which I refer. At that time we would still like very much to publish an article by you about genetic transduction. I have no way of knowing, of course, whether you would share our interest in the project. If you did, it would be necessary to approach the subject in simpler language and against a broader background.

I appreciate that it is a great deal easier to say this than to do it. In view of this, I should like to make a suggestion. Very likely you visit, or pass through, New York from time to time. If, on some such occasion, you could spare me about half an hour, I wish you would drop in to see us. We should like not only to meet you, but we may also have some useful suggestions as to how you may make the subject of your article somewhat easier for the nonspecialist to follow.

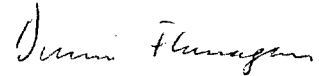
Dr. Joshua Lederberg

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Meantime I should like to thank you again for giving us an opportunity to read your manuscript. I shall return it under separate cover.

Cordially,



Dennis Flanagan  
Editor

DF:ap

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